

NYCU Bringing the World into the Classrooms of Fuli Junior High School

🕒 2022-06-13 - 📁 News

Mohammed W I Sulaiman (a.k.a. Su Mao-fan), a PhD student from Palestine, is demonstrating how to cover his head with a Palestinian kufiya. This is a unique skill of people in Muslim countries, including Palestine. He also performs a prayer dance from his hometown. In front of Sulaiman is a group of junior high school students around 13, 14 years old. As the children learn the unique wrapping method using a Palestinian kufiya, they listen to Sulaiman using fluent English to relate stories of his hometown.



Yesterday, like Sulaiman, six international students from National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University (NYCU) went to Fuli Junior High School (FJHS) in Xianshan District, Hsinchu City for cultural exchange and English teaching. Affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, these students from countries such as Brazil, Palestine, Indonesia, India, and Thailand employed distant teaching to share dances, cultures, and dietary features of their hometown.



Since last year, it has been the fifth time international students from NYCU went to FJHS to conduct the activity of "Bring the World into the Classroom." In addition to participants from Palestine, in the past, a student from Brunei taught the junior high school students how to play ukulele, and other students from the United States, Brazil, Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand, and Pakistan introduced their home culture.

FJHS is the smallest junior high school in Hsinchu City. However, it has a decade-long archery education that has won international fame. It also features a 20-year glass art education derived from the conventional skill of *chuchian*. It is the only junior high school in Hsinchu City located in an indigenous village. Considering the fact that FJHS is located in the rural area where cultural stimulations are lacking and corresponding to Taiwan's 2030 bilingual nation policy, in the last 3 years, FJHS has been proactively transforming itself with featured courses such as "Bilingual Course" and "AI Information Technology Education" to cultivate in future world citizens broad vision and favorable conduct. Under the invitation of FJHS's principal, Tu Ching-chuan, NYCU's Office of International Affairs cooperated with FJHS and launched the teaching activity of "Bring the World into the Classroom," which has become a featured course of FJHS's bilingual international education.

The "Bring the World into the Classroom" course is conducted during lunch break. International students from NYCU share the featured cultures, holidays, and etiquette of their country with seventh to ninth graders. They also endeavor in bilingual exchange by sharing their specialties such as sports, science experiments, and webpage design. Through these sharing under leisure topics, junior high school students in rural areas are provided with an English environment, and they are no longer afraid to communicate with foreigners.



This activity is the idea of Principal Tu. She maintained that FLJH is a small rural school with only three classes per grade. However, it has two featured international education courses, namely "FULI Xiangshan Wetland Preservation" and "Bring the World into the Classroom." She was grateful to NYCU for supporting her idea and sending international students to rural area to interact with FLJH students, facilitating the beautiful scene of older students leading younger students down the road of education.



Chin Mong-hwa, Vice President for International Affairs at the Office of International Affairs, NYCU, stated that although English is a compulsory course in junior high schools, for junior high school students, they rarely have the opportunity to be in touch with daily life English outside the textbooks or to interact with foreigners. He indicated that NYCU had over 1400 international students, and this international exchange met NYCU's Sprout Project and its goal for sustainable development, exercised the value of localized internationalization, and used action to support rural education, facilitating a tighter connection between the university and communities.